(6) COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO DELINQUENCY AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN THE PROVINCE.

* MRS. M. N. CLUBWALA :—" Mr. President, Sir, in moving my resolution recommending to the Government '*that a committee be appointed to enquire into the extent of delinquency among children and young persons in the Province and to examine the adequacy of the existing reformatory measures and making suggestions to promote the welfare and reclamation*' I would like to say from my personal experience of 11 years as a Magistrate sitting in the Juvenile Court and as the Honorary Secretary of the Children's Aid Society, that the delinquency amongst the children is growing every day. It is mostly due to poverty and broken homes. There are naturally more delinquent children in the poorer classes but we also find it in the middle class children too. Boys naturally form the larger majority of delinquents. There is one Borstal School in Palamcottah and there was a second school in Tanjore which has subsequently been closed. I would earnestly request the Government to open a second Borstal School as there is need for the same. There is one senior certified school for boys in Chingleput and three junior certified schools for boys in Ranipet, Bellary and Tanjore, one junior and senior certified school for boys and girls under the age of 10 in Madras and there is a junior and senior certified school for girls attached to the Madras Children's Aid Society now located in Tanjore. Other schools such as Seva Sadan, Salvation Army Homes, Avvai Home, the Muslim Orphanages, Anjumans, Sarada Vidyalaya and a few convents take some of these cases. There is the Stri Sadana Rescue Home in Madras and there are Rescue Shelter homes in Madura, Tanjore, Salem, Virudunagar, etc. Trichinopoly, Nellore and Vizagapatam have devised homes housed in a portion of the hospitals and other institutions. All these institutions are doing good work and serving a useful purpose for delinquent children but they are always overcrowded and therefore, with the best will in the world the authorities cannot pay due attention, as they should to these delinquent children and, naturally, these children need for more care and attention. The junior and senior certified schools for girls is now overcrowded. It is imperative that we should have another school for girls. In the year from 1942 to 1945, 684 girls have appeared before the courts. Five hundred and ninety-two have been restored to their parents, 89 sent to certified schools, 45 sent home to the mufassal and 75 undergoing treatment in the hospitals and a few others sent to the institutions as I have stated before. Of course, the Stri Sadana Rescue Home has also sheltered and educated 2,395 girls. I would call on the Government to have more Rescue and Training Homes under the Madras Vigilance Association.

" We have probation officers who were formerly attached only to the Children's Aid Society. These officers had studied child delinquency but unfortunately with the new Government Order, the same probation officers attend to both the adult and juvenile probation. To my mind this is not feasible. Juvenile probation is tackled in a manner different to that of the adult probation.

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The probation work is most useful and its need is imperative and it is the means of reforming the delinquent children or of those who are on the verge of delinquency. The probation officers regularly visiting the homes of the children have a setting effect on the children and also make the parents realize their responsibilities and make them feel that their attitude to the children is being watched and guided. Children on probation are also found employment and sent to night schools. Many a wavered child who would find its way into the certified school is improved in the first stages by probation. I request the Government to increase the strength of probation officers for juveniles both in the city and in the mufassal, both men and women probation officers. Since the probation system has been in force we have sent fewer children to certified schools than we did in the past. There should be juvenile courts and probation officers in at least all the important towns and chiefly in the industrial towns in the Province. Delinquent children, if they had the right line of approach, are won over and prove very often to be more intelligent and much inclined to kind treatment. Lieut.-Col. Thompson, a child psychologist and the Officer Commanding, the Military Hospital at Avadi, has adopted 12 boys from the Remand Home of the Children's Aid Society and his methods of approach to the problem deserve our attention.

"In several of the schools children are taught weaving, carpentry, smithy work, etc., but the inclusion of simple industries would serve a useful purpose and these children could, as they grow up, earn a living. I refer to mat and rope-making, spinning, dyeing and other simple arts, easy to master, but at the same time the initial outlay costing very little.

"Government institutions should be asked to employ young boys in offices such as peons, letter boys, clerks, etc., and girls as Red jackets in hospitals as well as teachers and companions.

"I would also take this opportunity to suggest to the Government the need for the appointment of a psychologist for this work. His guidance and expert advice would be of immense value to the authorities running the various reformatory schools and for those have taken an active interest in this work.

"In these various juvenile courts and also when the Woman Welfare Worker of the Madras Vigilance Association tours the district often she finds both boys and girls who are mentally backward. Unfortunately there are no places to send these children. Their condition is not as bad as to warrant their admission into a Mental hospital but at the same time they are mentally backward and are often the subject of redicule in the ordinary school. The Madras Children's Aid Society, after several years of working, obtained the Government's permission to start a home for mentally backward children for 20 children. Unfortunately, due to want of accommodation the Home has not been started. It is imperative to have the Home for boys and girls started as early as possible and I hope the committee will take this aspect also into consideration.

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" When one travels on the railway, I am sure that many of the hon. Members of this House will agree with me, the children begging for either money or food, or trying to pilfer from compartments are growing in number. The Police authorities in Madras round up these boys and send them up to the various juvenile courts for disposal. We often find among these children boys from the mufassal and return them to their parents. Perhaps if we had more schools there are several children who could go to an institution instead of their homes but want of space restricts our hands.

" In the Reception Home for boys and girls the total admitted was 5,096 boys and 198 girls. Of these 2,817 were Hindus, 318 Muslims, 157 Indian Christians and 2 Anglo-Indians. The causes of detention were theft uncontrollables, kidnapping, found wandering, destitutes, pick-pocketing, solicitation, gambling and immortal surroundings. The causes were disposed of as follows :—

Restored to parents	2,748
Sent to certified schools	145
Sent home (mufassal)	77
Handed over to police	111
Sent to Vigilance Association	13
Found Work	39

The rest were sent to other homes who receive children, and remaining still at the end of the year in the homes were 163 boys and 21 girls.

Stri Sadana—

Number of girls since its inception	2,393
Medically cured	1,536
Marriage performed	45
Trained for teachers (all employed)	18
Trained as nurses (,,)	25
Trained as cooks and maids	74
Restored to parents or husbands	1,257

4 girls are undergoing teacher's training.
3 ,, weaving training.
3 ,, needle work training.
2 girls are in the High School.
3 girls are undergoing midwifery training.

" I give these figures to show the House how the belief that girls who have been unfortunate can have a new lease of life if a proper approach is made.

" May I urge the House to adopt this resolution to appoint a committee to go into the matter in detail about the need for more certified homes, larger number of probation officers and wider scope to deal with delinquent children? I would also like to take this opportunity to suggest to Government that the committee should consist of people who have experience and knowledge of this work and are connected with the running of these institutions. The Government are in correspondence with several of the

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societies to provincialize these homes. Public support is lacking and hence the state will have to shoulder the responsibility but I trust there will always be a representative body of non-officials, who have studied these problems and have a practical knowledge, that will be appointed. In connexion with the Vigilance Association as has been repeated in this House and outside it, our work is increasing daily and so is the strength but funds are wholly inadequate; both, those given by the Government and public support. Yet, I would say—though I know several will not agree with me, let this association be state-aided but run the non-officials for the work here is entirely of the different nature to others—and lastly the Vigilance Association should come under Public Health and Certified Schools under Education and not the Jail department. Innocent children because they happen to be orphans are clubbed together with criminal and delinquent children. Why should those children have to appear before a court and all their life have this stigma?

" Also, the Government may be requested more scholarships in hospitals, technical schools, training schools, etc., for boys and girls from the certified schools to continue to become citizens on the same footing as any of us. What is the use of independence if we know that thousands of our children, future citizens of a Free India, should be uncared for."

MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—" Mr. President, Sir, I second this resolution." 7 p.m.

MR. PRESIDENT :—" I expected you to second it."

MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—" I am glad, Sir, to hear you say that; because that shows that you have anticipated what we wanted to be done. In regard to this resolution, Sir, I trust the Government will have no objection to having a committee on the lines that Mrs. Clubwala the hon. Mover of this resolution has proposed. This committee will not be a new one except from the aspect of being a Government Committee; because in the year 1932 at the request of Mr.—— afterwards Sir—Frederick James, who was at that time in this House—I think he was in the Legislative Council as it was then called and not the Assembly—there was an idea of bringing up a Beggar Bill. In 1932 all the Women's organizations in this city took up the work of making a survey of the position at that time and collected figures for giving effect to the provisions of the Bill in regard to the housing of the poor men, women and children also. This was entrusted to some of us in the All-India Women's Association and Mrs. Cleetus, especially, who is a great economic expert, took the lead in this matter and she was asked to report on it. We were all allotted different districts for doing the work and she got the report ready and co-ordinated it and I think it would be a very sound foundation if the Government starts with that committee's work as the foundation of its investigation because that report is a very true and faithful picture of conditions as they existed in the year 1932.

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I think there will be a great many of those associations still alive and working and of course also vastly improved in this interval of time.

" Now, Sir, I have noted that in the absence of a better solution, the hon. Mover has suggested that the Education department may take over this reform of children rather than Jails and Prisons. As you know, Mr. President, the Jails and Prisons department has more money than Education has and we have seen and heard many things about this subject more frequently of late and that is why the Jails and Prisons department was given the care of these children. In the view of the Government, as far as I can make out—I stand open to correction—there is a great need for the opening of a welfare department which will be fed direct from Government sources, i.e., from the Budget. Instead of entrusting these young children and growing citizens to the mercy of a department which has no finance or to a department which will be treated with a stigma, it may well be that a social service department is opened. And this committee that is suggested will be able to lay down constructive proposals on that behalf. I need say no more because I know time is going; I do not think I need add anything to what Mrs. Clubwala has so ably put forward with the help of facts of figures to show that the children in the city and in the whole Presidency need the attention of a committee and that such a committee must be appointed immediately by the Hon. Minister in charge who is noted for his commonsense, for his interest in social service, and for his care for the future citizens of the country. I am glad that he is in charge of this particular portfolio, and Sir, we have great hopes which I am sure he will not dash to the ground, that he will not disappoint us, but will agree to appoint the right committee for this work and press forward their work to completion by July next perhaps or even earlier."

The Hon. Sri K. MADHAVA MENON :—" Mr. President, Sir, indeed I am in a very delicate and difficult situation. The hon. Mover, Mrs. Clubwala, has been doing so much disinterested and very good work on these lines and she is so interested and earnest about this matter that it is very difficult to say 'no' to anything that Mrs. Clubwala asks for. But I am afraid, Sir, I have to be a bit of hard-hearted in this matter."

Mr. PRESIDENT :—" I thought there was some kind of understanding between you two. You were sitting with her."

The Hon. Sri K. MADHAVA MENON :—" I am sorry I cannot accept this resolution to have a committee appointed just at the present moment. I have listened very carefully to the very able speech full of facts and figures made by Mrs. Clubwala. She has had intimated association with various associations working for the emancipation of juvenile offenders and she has stated exactly the position prevailing in the province regarding the treatment of

juvenile offenders. She has in her speech made various suggestions for the improvement of and for the proper conduct of existing juvenile offenders' institutions and also the changes required therein. I have had occasion to go with her to the Stri Sadhana where the Rescue Home and the Shelter are being conducted and I have had also occasion to discuss with Lieut.-Col. Thompson who is a child psychologist, to whom she has referred in her speech. As a matter of fact, I may tell Mrs. Clubwala that it is already under consideration to appoint Lieut.-Col. Thompson, if the Government of India and the military authorities would permit, as Adviser to the various certified schools that are being run by the Government, to make suggestions as to how they should be improved on the model of the twelve boys whom he had taken and improved, in the words of Mrs. Clubwala 'beyond recognition.' She told me rather mischievously that she sent away the most mischievous and the worst boys to Lieut.-Col. Thompson and the result, when she afterwards visited them, was that they were changed 'beyond recognition.' Sir, Government are already considering the question of appointing him as Advisor to the various certified schools.

"There is considerable juvenile delinquency prevailing and something should of course be done in the matter. I do not want to speak much upon the matter, but I wish to assure Mrs. Clubwala that her resolution, as also the speech she has made in support of it, will be examined by me and anything that Mrs. Hensman has said will also be considered. Mrs. Hensman, the hon. Seconder of the motion, has credited me with considerable commonsense and sympathy in the matter. If that is so, she can certainly expect that Government will closely consider this matter. But at the present time, I may tell the House that the Government have already completely divided the reformatory or certified schools and taken them away from the Jail department and have placed juvenile offenders in charge of a Senior Inspector of certified schools —that special appointment has been made and a person who is a good scholar in psychology and has had considerable experience of jail life, who knows that it is very bad to give the idea of a jail atmosphere in treating children, has been put in charge. The various improvements and reforms suggested by the hon. Mover in her speech are also under consideration by the Government. The question of appointing a committee to enquire into the extent of delinquency and the adequecy of existing measures, I cannot accept now because I have not had occasion to examine the financial and other implications of a committee like that. Government will certainly examine the financial implications and do what is possible in the matter. I therefore appeal to Mrs. Clubwala not to press her resolution to vote, in which case I may have to oppose and vote against it, but I am anxious to assure her that the whole question will be examined with as much sympathy as I can be credited with, and I hope she will withdraw the resolution and not press it to a vote."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" She can bring it up once again if you fail in your duty."

MRS. M.N. CLUBWALA :—" Yes, Mr. President, I withdraw the resolution on the assurance given by the hon. Minister; but as you say, if we do not get satisfaction, I may have to bring it up once again."

The resolution was by leave of the House withdrawn.

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The work on the agenda is over; non-official days are few and far between and I really congratulate the House on having gone through the whole agenda so creditably, though it is in a way due perhaps to two or three members not moving their resolutions."

SRI B. BHIMA RAO :—" Sir, may we have to sit on the 26th?"

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The idea is: instead of sitting both here and there on the same day—which means both of us will not be able to do enough work—it has been agreed that the other House will sit to-morrow and if necessary the day after to-morrow till lunch time and finish its work. Then we will be sitting here the day after to-morrow from 3 p.m. If we finish the work that day, then we will not have to sit again; but if we do not finish on that day, I propose to request you to sit from 9 a.m. on the next day, the 26th, and finish the work by noon and go home."

The Council then adjourned to meet again at 3 p.m. on **Friday the 25th April 1947.**

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TRUTH ALONE TRIUMPHS